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Examiners' Report
June 2011

GCE Music Technology 6MT02 01

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Introduction

As last year, candidates were well-prepared by centres for the special focus question, more so for *Soul* than for *Indie Rock*, however.

It must be reiterated that many candidates' answers were overly long - particularly for question 5(f) - gaining full marks in the first few sentences and then writing on additional sheets. Centres are asked to advise candidates to write *only in the space provided*.

Most candidates chose to focus on Suede and The Stone Roses, with very few choosing Pixies; of those that did, very few showed any real knowledge of the band.

Candidates should also read the question carefully; if they are asked to discuss use of *dynamic processing*, they should not refer to *reverb* or *EQ*.

Question 1 (c)

This was generally well answered, although many candidates clearly had no idea that this 1971 recording was made on analogue equipment; this meant that 1(c) was often badly answered with reference to samples and software packages. Likewise, the term re-*mastering* was taken by many candidates to mean re-*mixing*, which led to many incorrect answers concerning the application of FX and compression to *individual* tracks and to *individual* tracks' relative levels in the mix.

(c) In this recording, which was made in 1972, the opening piano chord was reversed. Explain how this was achieved.

(2)

by Cutting and reversing the magnetic tape so it plays the Chord backwards.

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Examiner Comments

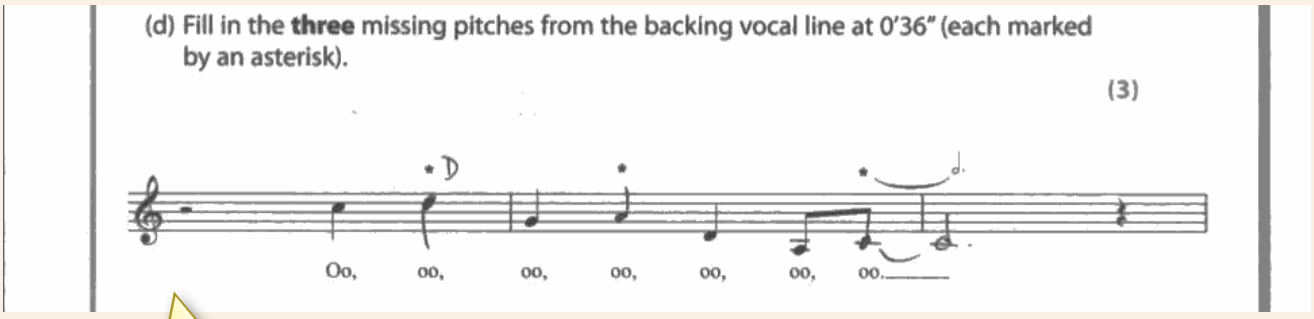
This candidate scored both marks for their response.

Question 2

This question proved quite straightforward for the more able candidate but had a couple of stumbling blocks.

Question 2 (d)

Question 2(d) was quite often answered incorrectly, despite the first two answers being only a tone away from the preceding note.



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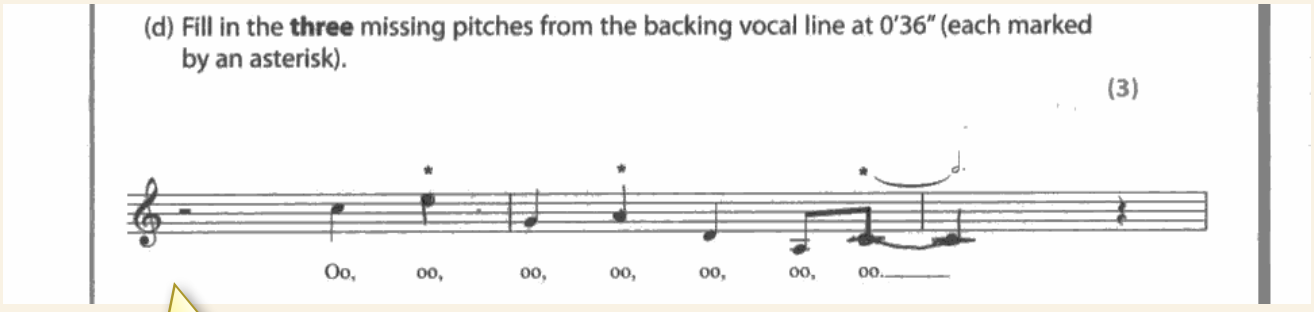
Examiner Comments

This response was awarded full marks.



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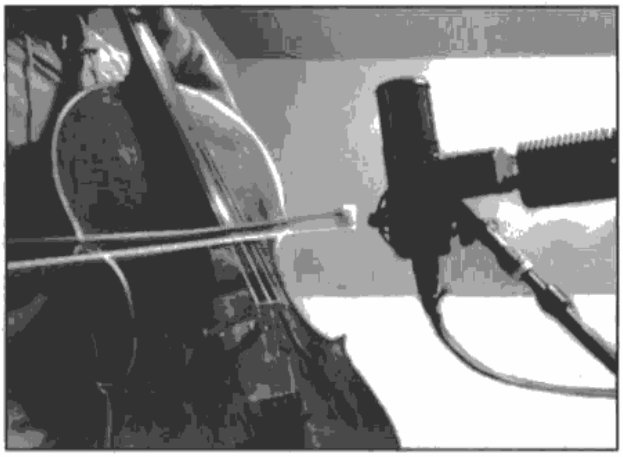
Examiner Comments

This response was awarded 2 marks.

Question 2 (e)

Likewise, 2(e) had some rather vague answers from those candidates with less knowledge of recording. *Compressor* mics were less noticeable this year. When asked for a *distance*, candidates should be reminded that *close, near,* and other vague descriptions will not gain a mark.

(e) The Cello features heavily in the texture of this recording. Look at the picture below and describe the **choice** of mic, the **distance** and the intended **result** of this setup.



	Description	Result
Choice of mic.	Capacitor/condenser (1)	a wide range of frequencies and captures a more natural tone (1)
Distance	40-45cm from the body (1)	Picks up some of the rooms ambience, and as its further away less boomy bass frequencies. more balance creating warm tone. (1)

(Total for Question 2 = 10 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This response scored 3 out of 4 marks.

Question 3

This was generally fairly well answered by most candidates, with the exception of; (d), where many students gave responses which didn't exist in the period; (f), where less able candidates seemed not to understand what was meant by *ambience* and (g) where many candidates lost a mark by talking about the *lyrical* content, which was not asked for in the question.

Question 3 (g)

Many candidates lost a mark here by talking about the *lyrical* content, which was not asked for in the question.

(g) This track was recorded in 1969. Outline three musical and/or technological features that support this statement.

(3)

1 Panning is very extreme, eg. the drums are far left: this is because of the desk used.

2 Slightly psychedelic / trippy feel, especially in the outro

3 Swirling, aleatoric sounds with orchestral instruments in outro show influence of Sgt. Pepper / John Cage / Stockhausen etc: typical of late 60s.

(Total for Question 3 = 10 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored full marks for this question.

Question 4

A large number of candidates could not identify the major key of the track in 4(a).

Question 4 (d)

The responses to 4(d) were often concerned with *individual* tracks rather than the *whole* mix; references to *pumping* were rare.

(d) Identify the dynamic processing applied to the whole mix and describe how this affects the music.

(2)

Compression is added This makes creates a balanced Mix of each individual instrument and gives a cleaner track for the listener.

(Total for Question 4 = 10 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS

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Examiner Comments

This response was awarded 1 out of the 2 possible marks.

Question 5

As noted in the general comments, most candidates scored well here, particularly in (a) and (f), demonstrating that candidates had a sound understanding of the genre, its development and relevant artists.

Question 5 (c)

5(c) proved more problematic in that responses often referred to *recording* rather than *mixing*, as specified in the question. Also, the explanation was often vague or did not relate to the technique.

(c) Identify **two** production techniques you might use when **mixing** multiple guitar tracks and explain why you would use them.

Production technique	Explanation
Seperation (1)	To be able to clearly define each instrument (guitar) hearing clearly in the Mix. (1)
Panning (1)	Panning left and right fully to seperate guitar sounds/techniques i.e thamonics in left speaker and strumming in the right (1) makes for a clearer, cleaner sound.

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Examiner Comments
2 out of 4 marks scored here.

(c) Identify **two** production techniques you might use when **mixing** multiple guitar tracks and explain why you would use them.

Production technique	Explanation
Panning differently (1)	To space out the sounds and make the whole guitar part sound thicker/ more separate (1)
Edit them so they are absolutely in time (1)	To tidy up any bits that are slightly 'out' and give a clearer result (1)

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Examiner Comments
Again, 2 out of 4 scored.

Question 6

This question proved problematic for many candidates. 6(a) saw many responses of the vague, 'they use the same line-up', or 'the lyrics are like Morrissey' variety.

Question 6 (a)

Idlewild: *When I Argue I See Shapes*

Track 6: music begins at 0'08"

(a) The Smiths were a spearheading Indie band in the 80s. Describe **three** stylistic similarities between this track and the work of The Smiths.

(3)

1 Depressing Vocals.

2 Punk unspired guitar

3 guitar tuned to pitch of voice.

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Examiner Comments
This candidate scored 1 mark.

Idlewild: *When I Argue I See Shapes*

Track 6: music begins at 0'08"

(a) The Smiths were a spearheading Indie band in the 80s. Describe **three** stylistic similarities between this track and the work of The Smiths.

(3)

1 Jangly the guitar sound

2 Anti-Hero lyrics

3 Almost spoken verse lyrics.

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Examiner Comments
This candidate scored 2 marks.

Question 6 (b)

Very few candidates knew that a tonic pedal was used in the guitar part for 6(b).

(b) Describe the harmonic function of the repeated pitch in the guitar track during the first verse (from 0'21").

(1)

It emphasises the tonic of the key. It is a tonic pedal.

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Examiner Comments

A good response by this candidate.

Question 6 (c)

(c) The chorus (from 0'48") is made up of four two-bar phrases. How many different chords are in the first **three** phrases and how many in the **fourth**?

(2)

there are 3 chord changes in the first three phrases and four in the fourth.

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Examiner Comments

This response was awarded 1 mark.

(c) The chorus (from 0'48") is made up of four two-bar phrases. How many different chords are in the first **three** phrases and how many in the **fourth**?

(2)

- ~~four~~ five
- ~~three~~ four

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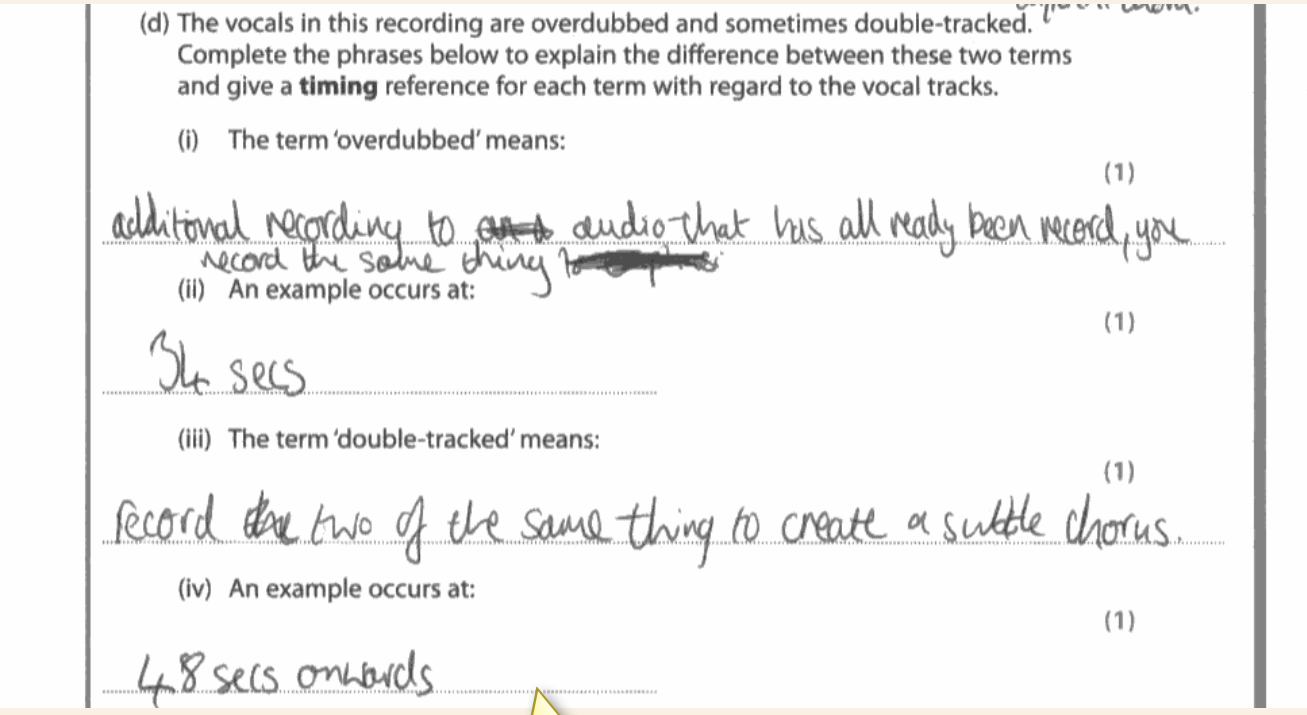
Examiner Comments

This response was awarded 2 marks.

Question 6 (d)

6(d) was unsuccessfully answered by many candidates who seemed to have little appreciation of the difference between *overdubbing* and *double-tracking*. Again, candidates should be reminded that, if asked for a *timing reference*, the answer should contain figures rather than a description.



(d) The vocals in this recording are overdubbed and sometimes double-tracked. Complete the phrases below to explain the difference between these two terms and give a **timing** reference for each term with regard to the vocal tracks.

(i) The term 'overdubbed' means:

(1)

additional recording to audio that has all ready been record, you record the same thing

(ii) An example occurs at:

(1)

34 secs

(iii) The term 'double-tracked' means:

(1)

record the two of the same thing to create a subtle chorus.

(iv) An example occurs at:

(1)

48 secs onwards

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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored 4 marks.

(d) The vocals in this recording are overdubbed and sometimes double-tracked. Complete the phrases below to explain the difference between these two terms and give a **timing** reference for each term with regard to the vocal tracks.

(i) The term 'overdubbed' means:

(1)

recording an audio signal from equipment onto a already mix tracks.

(ii) An example occurs at:

(1)

0'48"

(iii) The term 'double-tracked' means:

(1)

~~the A track~~ An audio signal is copied.

(iv) An example occurs at:

(1)

1'30"

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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored 2 marks.

Question 6 (g)

6(g) was generally poorly answered, if at all (many candidates did not complete the paper, mostly through giving too full an answer in 5(f), one suspects). For Pixies, the answers were vague or often plain wrong (Pixies were often from Manchester). Little mention was made of Suede's re-styling of glam or of The Stone Roses' psychedelic and house music pedigree

(g) Outline the musical styles of **two** of the following artists and their place in Indie Rock, referring to specific tracks where appropriate to illustrate your answer. Tick **two** boxes to indicate your choices.

- ☒ Pixies
- ☒ Suede
- ☒ The Stone Roses

Artist 1 Suede

(3)

Suede began in the early 1990's when many Indie bands were starting. Their were a few line up changes within their time together. Their first album had more of a grunge influence and got them signed to roughtrade records. Their album was very successful commercially and critically. Their 2nd album was similar to the first but their 3rd album had a melodic feel to it. They went on a long tour for promotion with guitarist Ed Buller writing introvertly to himself. They went back to their roots for their next album which was more grunge.

Artist 2 The Stone Roses

(3)

The Stone Roses began in 1989 and were very much part of the Madchester scene. The Stone Roses embraced the performance idea of Shoegazing as a band and released the song 'Fools Gold' which was one of their most famous songs. The Stone Roses took a good few years to write their next album due to band frictions and lots of touring. Their next album followed up but did not have the success of their first. They split up not long after the Britpop with singer Ian Brown going solo and bassist Mani joining primal scream.

(Total for Question 6 = 20 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored 4 marks.

(g) Outline the musical styles of **two** of the following artists and their place in Indie Rock, referring to specific tracks where appropriate to illustrate your answer. Tick **two** boxes to indicate your choices.

☒ Pixies

☐ Suede

☒ The Stone Roses

Artist 1 The Stone Roses.

(3)

The Stone Roses hail from Manchester. They were signed to factory records along with ~~the~~ the Smiths, and The Stone roses went on to be at the forefront of the rise of indie in the late 80s. with songs like 'She bangs the drums' the Roses were a huge band who influenced the emergence of bands who would go on to start ~~the~~ Britpop. Their style is ~~we~~ more suited to early indie rock, with lyrics about manchester and real life. This influenced bands such as Oasis and Blur to start the Britpop movement.

Artist 2 Pixies

(3)

Emerging in the late 80s from America, the Pixies brought a sound similar to the Smiths but with an American twist. Songs like 'where is my mind' set them apart from the american mainstream and put them firmly in the indie rock genre. The lyrics in the song are completely anti hero bringing a new twist on American music. The band and their iconic album "Doolittle" have influenced many bands under the indie umbrella as well as in other genres, for example bands such as My Chemical Romance and Blur have both cited Pixies as influences.

(Total for Question 6 = 20 marks)

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This candidate scored 3 marks.

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